

VICFA

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VICFA

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Website: www.VICFA.org
E-group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/VICFA>.

Share this newsletter with a friend - encourage others to join VICFA!

Annual membership is \$25.00.

Please make check payable to VICFA and send to PO Box 6838, Charlottesville, VA 22906.

MEMBERSHIP FORM (please print clearly)

* Required fields

*Date _____
*First Name _____ *Last Name _____
Company /Farm Name _____
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County _____ Congressional District _____
*Phone (_____) _____ - _____
E-mail _____
Website _____

Producers, please list the products that you sell:

*Do you want to be listed in the Membership Directory? Yes No

Note. Your directory listing will contain all of the above information unless you indicate otherwise below.

How did you hear about VICFA?

Comments:

VICFA Voice

Our Mission: To promote and preserve
unregulated direct farmer-to-consumer trade that fosters
availability of locally grown or home-produced food products

February 2013

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Political Lessons Learned From HB 1852

By Christine Solem

Mommy, Mommy, Where Do Regulations Come From?

Everybody always wants to know--from what nether regions do all these laws and regulations come? It reminds me of when I was a child growing up in the 50's and asked my mother where the kittens came from that suddenly showed up nursing the cat. In true 50s fashion, my mother told me that the cat went and dug them up. Sex didn't exist in the 50's as far as parents were concerned. It's a wonder the U.S. didn't show a decline in population during that era.

The answer to the initial question above is YOU. You inadvertently make all these laws and regulations (with lots of "help" from the government). There are certain "tools of the trade" involved in this procedure. The original HB 1852, before Delegate Orrock amended it, contained a plethora of such tools. I could write a dissertation on the matter, but it will suffice to highlight just two of them.

No. 1. The Bill, on its face, allowed you to sell more than the 2008 exemptions for candies and certain jams, jellies and baked goods. Rather, you could sell a "food product". This encouraged everyone to want the Bill. But the language was broad--too broad, instigating confusion, more opposition on food safety grounds, and as a consequence, draconian amendments to the Bill as it moved through the rest of the House and then the Senate. Confusion is the name of the game in the General Assembly--divide and conquer through skillful political manipulations, and you will end up with more regulation and lose the exemptions you already have, unless you demand that the Bill be struck.

No. 2. The Bill sought to divide persons by mandating in the Misbranding section of the Code that all persons under inspection must have labels on their products stating that they are inspected. This would drive an even deeper wedge between those that are "approved" through inspection and those who don't have to be. Divisiveness works because there is a certain aspect of human nature that compels some persons to feel that, if they have to jump through hoops and others do not, no matter what the circumstances, that they are somehow better than the others because they are "approved", and that the whole thing is somehow unfair. This quirk of human nature is exploited and manipulated by the government to get more laws and regulations. "Approved" people will always clamor for more regulations if nudged in the right direction.

I have never understood this unfortunate aspect of *Homo Sapiens*.

Perhaps that is why I prefer animals. After all, how is anyone really better than another? We all fight the grim reaper and lose. We all have to perform rather unsightly functions every day just to keep our bodies working well, including, but not limited to, brushing our teeth. All that foaming of the mouth and spitting is hardly charismatic. But of course you have to brush your teeth to remove all the multitude of

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bacteria in your mouth that could rot your teeth and then progress to annihilate your whole body in one fell swoop. According to agribusiness, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Farm Bureau, such a multitude of bacteria does not exist anywhere else in the universe except in raw milk-- and oh, maybe in pickles. But I digress.

In short, the government skillfully maneuvers. You to get as many laws and regulations as it can. But don't feel too shamed about being "had". These guys are good at this stuff! They undoubtedly take numerous courses in the art of manipulation and undergo strict rigorous testing. No doubt they all hold some degree from some secret university deep underground. I guess you might say they are "approved".

VICFA originally opposed HB 1852. Then Delegate Orrock amended it just before Sub-committee on January 28th. He put back in our 2008 exempted language for candies and certain jams, jellies and baked goods. Most importantly, he struck the broad term "food product" and inserted a variety of specific food items such as dried herbs, granola, etc., and behold even added pickles!

He also struck the language in the Misbranding section of the Code requiring all persons who are inspected to have a label of their product stating such. VICFA was able to support HB 1852 at that point. Agribusiness opposed it, but VDACS and Farm Bureau took no position. The Bill was reported out of Sub-Committee unanimously. We will continue to babysit the Bill as it progresses through the rest of the House and then the Senate.

I firmly believe we would not have been successful if it were not for the massive political pressure exerted by Martha Boneta and Bernadette Barber with their broader farmer rights Bills, HB 1430 and HB 1839 respectively. Thanks to their hard work and courage that Sub-committee room was filled and many had to stand outside in the hall. Yes, the local food movement has become a tidal wave. In the face of such momentum the politicians gave ground on HB 1852. Herein lies another valuable political lesson. You may inadvertently make all those laws and regulations, but *you* have the raw political power to wipe them out. ■

In Memory Of Our Dear Friend, PEARCE GARDNER

By Martha Boneta



I am deeply mourning the loss of our dear friend, **PEARCE FOSTER GARDNER**. Pearce, a friend, confidante and inspiration, died at the young age of 58 in Dunnsville, Virginia.

Pearce was a man of God, a gentle soul and a Virginia Farmer. He was a faithful Episcopalian, a colonial dancer, loved sailing and was an avid practitioner of intensive organic farming. Pearce was a member of the Northern Neck Bee Keepers, a member of the Board of Directors for VICFA, and the Diocese of Southern Virginia Cursillo Community.

Pearce was a pioneer in fighting to protect the rights of small family farmers and raw milk. His passion for farming and making the local food shed viable in Virginia made Pearce a leader in the farm to consumer movement. I know Pearce would be so proud that HB1852 and HB1430 have made it through the General Assembly House in Richmond.

Pearce Gardner graced our life and will forever be an inspiration to us all.

Government By The People

By Suzi Croes

For me, the opening lines of our constitution: "We the People" say it all. It is the right and duty of the American People to police the U.S. governing body by their participation. The constitution does not start with "We the Politicians" or "We the Government". If the voice of the people remains silent; what will the servants of government hear?

When I'm explaining about a Bill and asking for people to take action and get involved by contacting their legislative representative, I often hear "it's a waste of time. Politicians never listen". This mystifies me a bit. I cannot understand the complacency of people who hand over the power they hold on shaping the issues that concern them. By their own lack of participation, government officials have no recourse but to listen to those that show up, usually paid lobbyists. Expecting that your representative will know your wishes without communication is unrealistic.

This year's legislative session is a good example of what can happen when the People speak out. The simultaneous entry of three separate Agricultural bills that intend to expand the market and property rights for small farmers had the legislators at odds with the normal opponents, namely VDACS, Agribusiness, and Farm Bureau. The presence of the People was felt on every level as phone calls, letters, emails, and personal visits to Delegates were made from VICFA, Virginia Food Freedom, Fauquier Free Citizens, Weston A Price Foundation, Farm to Consumer Legal Defense Fund, The Heritage Foundation and many more, all working for the same cause; food freedom and the right to make a living as a small farmer.

On Monday January 28th, 2013 the General Assembly was descended upon by people arriving from all over the state of Virginia in support of HB 1430, HB 1839, and the amended HB 1852. There was even a visit from "George Washington" in full period regalia! The crowd in attendance marched in solidarity, showing their support of property rights and farming freedom.

A press conference with Delegate Lingamfelter the patron of HB 1430 and HB 1839, Constitutional Attorney Mark Fitzgibbons, Kimberly Hartke from Weston A Price Foundation, and Delegate Rob Bell spurred the crowd on into the General Assembly for the subcommittee meeting. Held to a packed crowd, the room was so full that many had to remain in the hallway. Speaker after speaker approached the mike as news cameras recorded the comments. Among the many were Christine Solem, Martha Boneta, Mark Fitzgibbons, Bernadette Barber, and Joel Salatin, whose eloquent words brought quiet to the room. But what really brought the house down was when young Dylan, a ten year old 5th grader, started speaking and when asked to state his name, he quipped back "I'm getting to that" with polite southern charm.

As a result of all this public attention, the Agricultural Subcommittee would have been hard pressed not to listen to the will of the People. It was the activism of the many that stood out. I have seen good bills die on the table without even a vote. With so many constituents present and more in the wings calling and emailing, the Ag Subcommittee passed both HB 1852 and HB 1430, and while HB 1839 failed, it was voted on leaving a record of accountability for voters to see. And at the time of this writing, both bills have made it through the House and are on to the Senate Agricultural Committee. How different would the outcome have been for these bills had people just remained quietly home?

To all of the People this Legislative year that made their voices be heard, I thank you. There is much that can be accomplished when we participate, are vigilant, and speak up in the shaping of our world. ■

"The good sense of the people will always be found to be the best army. They may be led astray for a moment, but will soon correct themselves."
- Thomas Jefferson

VICFA Notes

Don't miss our Feb. Meeting

The Feb. Meeting will be held in Wingina, VA on Feb. 10, 2013.

**** REGULAR HOURS ARE NOW IN EFFECT ****

VICFA would like to extend our appreciation to our host for this month's meeting. Thank you to Richard Bean!

We will share in a potluck lunch at **12:00** pm, followed by our general business meeting from 1:00 - 3:00 pm. VICFA membership meetings are open to the public. Please bring a dish and a big helping of enthusiasm to share. Broaden our reach - invite a friend or neighbor to join you.

Sunday, February 10, 2013

12:00 Noon
hosted by Richard Bean
1407 Huntinglodge Rd
Wingina, VA

DIRECTIONS:

From Charlottesville Area: Take 9th St NE (VA-20). Turn left onto Monticello Ave. Proceed for about 16 miles. Turn right onto Langhorne Rd. After 1.4 miles, Bear left onto VA-626. Continue on Langhorne Rd. After about 3 miles, Turn right onto James River Rd. Continue on VA-626 for 0.3 mile, then Bear left onto James River Rd. Continue on James River Rd. Continue on Cabell Rd. for about 8 miles, then Turn right onto James River Rd (VA-56). After about 2.4 miles, Turn right onto Hunting Lodge Rd. Go approximately 1.4 miles. Your destination on Hunting Lodge Rd is on the left.

From the Richmond area: Take I-195 N, (toll road) toward I-64 W. Keep left onto Powhite Pky (VA-146 S) (partial toll road) toward VA-150/US-60/VA-288. After about 6 miles, Take the US-60/Midlothian Tnpk exit onto Midlothian Tpke (US-60 W). Proceed for about 60 miles. Turn right onto S James River Hwy (VA-56). Proceed for about 15 miles. Turn right onto Hunting Lodge Rd. After about 1.4 miles, your destination on Hunting Lodge Rd is on the left.

BOARD MEMBER POSITION AVAILABLE

If you're interested in becoming a VICFA Board Member, please contact us. We have an immediate position available. For information on the VICFA Board, please visit our website: www.vicfa.org. With questions or to see how you may be the best person for this board member position, please contact Lois Smith at: (804) 550-7460.

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